



WISCONSIN

**DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Division of Economic Support  
Bureau of Welfare Initiatives

**TO: Economic Support Supervisors  
Economic Support Lead Workers  
Training Staff  
FSET Administrative and Provider Agencies  
Child Care Coordinators  
W-2 Agencies**

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**BWSP OPERATIONS MEMO**

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**Non W-2 [X] W-2 [ ] CC [ ]**

**PRIORITY: URGENT**

**SUBJECT: FOOD STAMP CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY CHANGES**

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**CROSS REFERENCE:** Food Stamp Handbook, Appendix 1.3.1

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 10/25/99

**PURPOSE**

This memo notifies Food Stamp (FS) eligibility workers of a change to the FS categorical eligibility policy and to CARES screen ANBC (Benefits Received #2).

**BACKGROUND**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (USDA/FNS) expanded its definition of categorical eligibility. Under the new federal policy, in addition to some other forms of assistance that result in categorical eligibility, receipt of any TANF funded services will also result in FS categorical eligibility. Furthermore, the FS group is determined categorically eligible if any group member receives any of the assistance types discussed below. Previously, all group members had to receive the assistance types to be categorically eligible.

**CURRENT RULES**

Currently, if **all** members of a FS group receive a W-2 payment, General Relief (GR), SSI, Kinship Care, or Caretaker Supplement, the entire FS group is categorical eligible. If a FS group is categorically eligible, the assets and income of the group are not tested against the FS asset, gross income, and net income limits. The group's net income determines the group's allotment.

**NEW RULES**

If **any** member of a FS group receives any of the following assistance types in a month, then the entire FS group is categorically eligible :

1. W-2 payment positions (all)
2. W-2 case management (all)

3. W-2 Caretaker of an Infant
4. W-2 Trial Job
5. Kinship Care
6. Caretaker Supplement (C-Supp)
7. Employment Skills Advancement Program (ESAP)
8. Child Care Assistance (all)
9. Job Access Loan  
JAL's should be considered categorically eligible if the loan was received in the current certification period.
10. Children First
11. Welfare to Work (WtW)
12. Job Ride
13. Milwaukee Jobs Initiative

The last 2 programs (#12 & #13) are based in Milwaukee County. Receipt of these services should occur only in Milwaukee County. If any of these services were received in a month where the case transferred from Milwaukee County to a non-Milwaukee county, consider the FS group to be categorically eligible for that month.

The categorical eligibility policy does not change for recipients of SSI and/or GR because they are not TANF funded services. They will continue to have their individual categorical eligibility determined by CARES based on responses on ANBR.

Furthermore, the rules governing Mixed Categorical Eligibility (FSH, Appendix 1.3.2) also apply to the newly categorically eligible individuals.

**Example 1:** Gilligan and Skipper are non-related adults in the same FS group. Gilligan has \$200 in a savings account and earns \$500/month as a ship's mate. Skipper has \$400 in a savings account and earns \$1000/month as a tourist ship captain. Skipper receives Children First case management. Since Children First is a TANF funded service, the entire FS group is categorically eligible. The assets from Gilligan and Skipper will **not** be budgeted for the FS group. Also, any income from Gilligan and Skipper will **not** be used in the gross or net test. The net income from Gilligan and Skipper is used to determine the FS allotment.

**Example 2:** MaryAnn and Ginger are non-related adults in the same FS group. MaryAnn has \$300 in a savings account and earns \$600/month as a Pie Baker. Ginger has \$100 in a savings account and receives \$448/month in SSI. Because she receives SSI, Ginger is categorically eligible. Her assets are not counted and her net income is used to help determine the group's FS allotment. MaryAnn receives no TANF funded services or GR or SSI. Her assets **will** be counted in the asset test and her income **will** be counted in the gross income and net income tests. Since she passes those tests, her net income **will** be used to help determine the group's FS allotment. This is a mixed categorically eligible FS case.

## CARES CHANGES

Screen ANBC is being changed to add a field called "TANF services." The field is a Y/N switch and must be answered for each individual.

Beginning 10/25/99, workers should ask clients at application and review if they are currently receiving any of the TANF services listed above. If a group member does, answer "Y" for the individual receiving the service. If any person's TANF switch is "Y" CARES will make the entire FS group categorically eligible. Their assets won't be counted and the gross and net income tests will not be used. Their net income will be used to determine the allotment.

A "?" is not an allowed entry in this field, so the case cannot pend for this reason. If the client is unsure if they are receiving one of the above TANF services, answer "N". If the client states they receive one of the above TANF services, answer "Y".

At any time a worker knows of a change in the status of receipt of TANF services, s/he should make the change on ANBC and run SFED. However, the worker is only required to ask this question at intake or review.

Categorical eligibility status is found in the upper right corners of screens EFGT (FS gross income test), EFNT (FS net income test), and EFAD (FS allotment determination). CARES now correctly determines categorical eligibility if all FS group members receive either SSI, a W-2 cash payment (but not case management or Trial Jobs), and/or GR. This will not change.

Further changes will be made in CARES next year so receipt of Child Care, Kinship Care, C-Supp, or any type of W-2 services by any FS group member will automatically make the group categorically eligible. The TANF Services field on ANBC will still be used for other TANF funded services since there are several that are not entered in CARES.

## ANBC

ANBC		BENEFITS RECEIVED (2 OF 2)				10/13/99 10:34	
CASE: XXXXXXXXXX		WORKER: XCTC91				XCTC91 D HIPPLER	
LAST UPDATED:		CASE STATUS: PENDING				CASE MODE: INTAKE	
NUM	NAME	BEGIN MMYY	KINSHIP BEN CO	CARE VR	TANF SERVICES		
01	SAMAN T	1099	—	—	—		
02	SON1 T	1099	—	—	—		
-----INDIVIDUALS-----							
01 SAMAN T (PP )		02 SON1 T ( )					
NEXT TRAN: _____		PARMS: XXXXXXXXXX_____					

## Help Screen

To assist local agencies, the TANF services that result in categorical eligibility have been added to the help screen for ANBC.

## DEFINITION OF TANF SERVICES

These changes relate to the Food Stamp Program only. They are in no way related to the definition of "TANF assistance" for purposes of ticking a participant's clock. Please refer to Operations Memo 99-70 for information on TANF assistance.

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